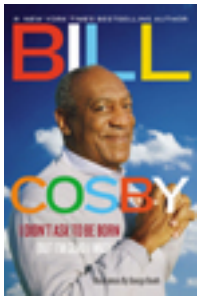

By Bill Cosby, illustrations by George Booth

Oh, the things you said to your parents!

Imagine how melty they felt when you, as a toddler, declared your love and adoration. Think about how proud they were when you spouted the kind of child-wisdom that kids always seem to utter. Remember how they told everybody all about the cute things you used to say?

Imagine how they felt the first time you screamed “NO!” or declared hate or reminded them that it wasn’t your idea to enter the world.

Out of the mouths of babes? Yes, and into the new book by Bill Cosby. In “I Didn’t Ask to Be Born (But I’m Glad I Was),” the Cos is back to make us laugh about childhood, parenting, and things in between.

We’ve all, it seems, spent part of our lives hanging out with Fat Albert, Mushmouth, and Weird Harold. They were our friends, too, and we couldn’t get enough of them. So in this book, Bill Cosby gives us more.

Years ago, when Cos lived in Philadelphia, Old Mother Harold lived in a nearby apartment. She hated when kids skateboarded near her house, so she chased them – and, by the way, “skateboard” is the correct word, since it was made from two skates and a board.

And then there was Peanut Armhouse.

Peanut Armhouse was an old friend whose mother had an unusual way of calling him home. One day, during a particularly hot baseball game, Peanut’s mother came out and hollered but Peanut was up to bat and, with jaws dropped, the other boys watched him morph into something they didn’t recognize. After that, let’s say that Peanut Armhouse was never seen again in person…

On another note, Cosby is sure that there are pages missing from the Bible. What, for instance, did God do with the animals after Adam named them? Did Adam get tired doing it? Where did Eve get a needle and thread to sew leaves? Cosby doesn’t know the answers but he is pretty sure that God has a wife.

In this book, you’ll learn the difference between getting a beating versus getting a whupping; wise words for grooms and grandparents; wise advice for parents; observations on the parenting styles of animals and people; and a bittersweet story about Cosby’s son, Ennis.

So when was the last time you had a good, hearty laugh? If it’s been awhile, then you’re overdue and “I Didn’t Ask to Be Born” will set you right.

Author Bill Cosby’s voice comes through strong in this book. In fact, it’s hard not to hear him inside your head while you’re reading. Cosby’s childhood, his family, things he did for love, and the things he ponders are all fair game for fun-poking. But, as always, Cosby seems to be winking at his audience and his stories are good-natured.

They’re also wickedly on-target, and hilarious.

This book is classic Cos, quick to read, and fans will love it. Grab “I Didn’t Ask to Be Born (But I’m Glad I Was)” and you’ll be glad he was, too.

Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer